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**Malawi Electoral Cycle Support
2017-19**

Second Quarter Project Progress Report

April - June 2018

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I. PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

The Project contributes directly to the SDG 16 goal of ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels. The primary goal of the Project is to assist in Malawi's consensual development of procedural certainty among key electoral stakeholders. This goal arises against the backdrop of a unique opportunity for transformation that has arisen from electoral and political reform processes. The Project is structured around four outputs:

- (1) The MEC is trusted by the public and political parties as an impartial entity possessing the capacity to administer and manage elections in accordance with regional and international obligations;
- (2) Women's political empowerment throughout the electoral cycle is strengthened;
- (3) Enhanced ability of key stakeholders, including political parties, to contribute to orderly and inclusive elections; and
- (4) Effective and efficient management, partnership formation and monitoring and evaluation of the Project.

In contrast to past efforts, the scope of the Project's outputs emphasizes a broader conceptual approach toward engaging key actors in fostering democratic development in Malawi. This methodological shift reflects an appreciation for the anticipated challenges likely to arise for the elections in 2019 and draws from the experience of past processes and, among others, is aimed at strengthening the capacity of MEC to address the multi-dimensional challenges of election administration. As such, in addition to the support to the MEC, the Project supports identified key stakeholders whose work directly impacts on the conditions conducive for credible and genuine elections. In substance, this multifaceted approach seeks to enhance the engagement of the MEC in managing the electoral process by engendering higher levels of capacity, engagement and ownership among influential stakeholders in the electoral process, and thereby, furthering the acceptance of outcomes. Equally, the coordination of these efforts through a single Project will ensure strengthened horizontal dialogue among stakeholders and commensurately improve the coherency, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of national and international efforts to support Malawi's electoral process and democratic development.

Activities contributed towards the achieving the following five key outcomes areas identified in the AWP as agreed between the Malawi Electoral Commission, the Ministry of Finance, UNDP, UNWOMEN and the Centre for Multi-Party Democracy.

II. SECOND QUARTER PROJECT FOCUS AND ACTIVITIES

The second quarter focused on preparing for the voter registration exercise that was initially due to start at the end of May and was then postponed to the 26th June to allow the political parties to nominate their monitoring agents. The project was not originally foreseen to play a frontline role in this part of the electoral process. However, to ensure that no eligible person is turned away from the voter registration exercise, the project began supporting side-by-side civic and voter registration facilities with increased allocations from the basket fund donors¹. It also supported MEC in intensifying the voter education campaign using mobile loudhailer systems that were being deployed in each District where the voter

¹ Through several working group sessions of the donor Heads of Missions, it was agreed that the project would be given further resources to support the voter registration process, increase voter education and more effective results transmission. The final amounts of these increases will be stated in the next quarterly report.

registration exercise was taking place. This is anticipated to continue throughout the 8 voter registration phases that will terminate on 9th November.

Elsewhere in the project, the gender-based work saw increased momentum with the training of MEC senior management on gender-based issues (from the most generic concepts to the direct application in MECs work processes), the gender mainstreaming of MEC's administrative and operational process and a new MEC gender policy. Work also progressed on the identification of monitors for the Violence against Women (VAW) network that will eventually provide monitoring reports to the Gender Engagement Room which will established in the next quarter.

III. ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED

The project supported the following key activities within the reporting period:

- ✓ 10 April, by-elections in Malinde and Milonde Wards;
- ✓ 14 – 23 April and 1 May, training and deployment of Constituency Civic and Voter Education Assistants;
- ✓ April, Recruitment of Biometric Voter Registration Kit Operators and Constituency Civic and Voter Education Assistants
- ✓ 14 -16 and 25 – 27 Workshops for District Election Clerks (Central and Northern Regions);
- ✓ 23 April, Civic and Voter Education Strategy validation workshop;
- ✓ 26 April, MEC/political parties coordination meeting;
- ✓ 27 April, National Elections Consultative Forum meeting
- ✓ 20 – 31 May, Training of Trainers for Master Trainers
- ✓ 22 May, Communication Strategy validation workshop
- ✓ 25 June, Launch of Voter Registration exercise in all first phase Districts
- ✓ 26 June commencement of Voter Registration exercise
- ✓ 2nd Steering Committe held

IV. RESULTS ACHIEVED

PLANNED OUTPUTS	ACTUAL OUPUTS and ACTIVITIES AS PER THE 2017 AWP
<p>Activity Result 1.1 MEC successfully introduces administrative and management reforms, and implements feasible electoral reforms prior to the 2019 elections</p>	<p>The project funded and provided technical support for the implementation and achievement of the following activities and results in Q2:</p> <p>No activities were implemented within this result area in Q2 as not foreseen in this quarter. See M&E Framework</p>



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<p>Activity Result 1.2: Public perceptions of the MEC are transformed through more effective communications and stakeholder outreach</p>	<p>The project funded and provided technical support for the implementation and achievement of the following activities and results in Q2:</p> <p>June, Communication Strategy validation workshop - the project had hired a Communications specialist in the first quarter to consult with relevant stakeholders and research into existing documentation to come up with a draft strategy. This strategy was presented at a validation meeting on 22nd May at which it was largely adopted with some further modifications. The strategy will help MEC become more effective in how it communicates and interacts with stakeholders using different mediums including print, electronic and social media. This in turn will assist MEC to improve its corporate image through the deployment of effective and targeted communication methods, tailor-made for the different audiences and stakeholders including political parties, the media, CSOs and voters. Project support for this was both technical and financial.</p> <div data-bbox="277 725 1469 801" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"><p>Result: strategy validated and adopted for use.</p></div> <p>27 April, NECOF meeting - the project supported the organisation of the second National Elections Consultative Forum (NECOF) for 2018. This NECOF focused on briefing stakeholders on MEC's preparations for the voter registration exercise that started on 26 June and will run till 9 November 2018. MEC's calendar for the voter registration exercise, which will take place in 8 phases, was shared with stakeholders. Key MEC decisions, including the use the National Biometric Identity Card (National ID) as the sole document for voter registration, was communicated, discussed and agreed with stakeholders.</p> <div data-bbox="309 1140 1469 1352" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"><p>Result: NECOF? agreement on the use of the National ID as the only eligible document for registration as a voter; stakeholders were concerned that MEC's decision to establish satellite registration centres to register persons without National IDs may disenfranchise many as these centres will be too distant from the voter registration centres. It was as a result of these concerns that MEC - with the support of the project - established side by side civic and voter registration teams.</p></div> <p>In addition to the above, there was extensive stakeholder engagement on the voter registration and use of the biometric registration kits including parliament, political parties, CSOs and traditional leaders. MEC also conducted demonstrations as part of its proof of concept in selected districts in the northern, central and southern regions.</p>
<p>Activity Result 1.3: the professional knowledge and technical skills of the Commissioners and Secretariat Staff at all levels enhanced, and 'in house' training capacity built in</p>	<p>The project funded and provided technical support for the implementation and achievement of the following activities and results in Q2:</p> <p>20 – 31 May, Master Trainers train Voter Registration field staff – the project, as reported in Q1, supported MEC with the recruitment of 237 Master Trainers to provide in-house training for all the stages of the electoral process. The Master Trainers, with the financial support of the project, have been taken through a Training of Trainers (ToT) programme to equip them with the requisite skills to be able to effectively carry out the training of other staff. The Master Trainers went on to train the Voter Registration Supervisors for the voter registration process that started on 26 June.</p> <div data-bbox="296 1850 1453 1939" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"><p>Result: Over 700 field operators trained on voter registration processes from the Master Trainers.</p></div>

<p>Activity Result 1.4: the efficiency, transparency and integrity of electoral processes for the 2019 Tripartite Elections enhanced</p>	<p>The project funded and provided technical support for the implementation and achievement of the following activities and results in Q2:</p> <p>25 and 26 June, Launch and commencement of VR exercise in all first phase Districts - As reported in Q1, the project assisted MEC to develop and implement inter-operability protocols and linkages between its systems and those of NRB. The initial support in this area was technical through the coordination of interaction and exchange between the NRB and MEC teams and by ensuring technical staff from NRB were on hand to assist MEC in thinking through system requirements. There were also software updates required to ensure that registration kits are able to perform as required by MEC. This support allowed MEC to adequately identify its IT system needs that enabled it to use the National ID for voter registration purposes. The second phase of the project's support included both technical and funding for specific activities during the voter registration exercise. These included the provision of funding support for the payment of all NRB registration officers supporting the side-by-side voter registration exercise. This became necessary to ensure stakeholder acceptance of the use of the National ID as the sole document for the purposes of voter registration. The establishment of side-by-side registration will also eliminate possibilities of disenfranchising eligible voters who are still without the National ID. The project also provided funding for the procurement of spare parts for the Biometric Registration Kits as well as senior technical support for higher-level repairs. Many of the machines had taken some wear and tear under the mass registration last year and subsequent warehousing and this has to be compensated for.</p> <p>Based on the lessons learned from the first phase, the project is also providing additional funding support for enhanced voter education on the voter registration exercise. The project is directly increasing the use of loud hailers as these have been identified as an effective means of bringing people to the centres to register. The project is further providing technical support, using in-house media and communication expertise within UNDP, to assist MEC engage in social media campaigns using Facebook, Twitter and other platforms to engage the young and social media active population on the voter registration process.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Result: MEC has been able to run side-by-side voter and national registration teams at every registration centre; the procurement of spare parts for the Biometric Registration Kits will ensure that MEC operations are not hindered by broken down Biometric Registration Kits.</p> </div>
<p>Activity Result 1.5: Strengthen electoral dispute resolution processes and mechanisms</p>	<p>The project funded and provided technical support for the implementation and achievement of the following activities and results in Q2:</p> <p>April – May, Development of complaint handling guidelines – The project provided technical and financial support towards the development of a comprehensive guidelines for the management of disputes and complaints in the electoral process. The project also funded the stakeholder consultations including the validation workshop that was organised in Lilongwe on 16 May. The consultant completed his work and the guidelines have been validated by stakeholders. MEC is now in the process of gazetting the procedures.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Result: MEC for the first time has comprehensive dispute handling guidelines (including timelines) for the handling of complaints in the electoral process. Stakeholders present at the validation workshop hailed the quality and comprehensive nature of the guidelines and indicated their firm belief that if implemented fully, it will streamline the process and reduce the tension that is normally generated due to the poor handling of complaints, especially at the polling station and collation stages of the process.</p> </div>
<p>Activity Result 1.6: Strengthen the capacity of the MEC to coordinate and</p>	<p>The project funded and provided technical support for the implementation and achievement of the following activities and results in Q2:</p>

<p>conduct effective, nationwide, voter education campaigns prior to the 2019 Tripartite Elections</p>	<p>23 April, CVE Strategy validation workshop – As reported in Q1, the project hired two consultants to assist MEC with the development of its CVE Strategy for the 2019 tripartite elections. The strategy has now been finalised and was validated by stakeholders on 23 April. Stakeholders present during the validated all agreed that the strategy was of high quality and if properly applied by MEC will enhance its communication and voter education on the various phases of the electoral process. Project support in the process was both technical and financial: the project funded the recruitment of two consultants and also funded the logistics for the organisation of consultative workshops with key stakeholders including the validation workshop. In ensuring value for money, the project used the presence of the 2 consultants to assist MEC CVE Department with the development of CVE messages.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Result: high quality CVE Strategy developed, and it is being used for VE on the VR exercise; the consultants also assisted MEC to think through the development of content and messages and the most effective channels and methods of communicating CVE messages using different media and formats</p> </div>
<p>Activity Result 1.7: Ensure gender mainstreaming and gender equality is enhanced within the MEC and MEC's internal processes and practices are gender sensitive</p>	<p>The project provided funding and technical support for the following activities in Q1:</p> <p>The project provided technical support to MEC through the project's Gender Specialist for the review of all key documents and procedures to make them gender sensitive and gender responsive. The project also funded a gender training to MEC Senior Management. The objective of the training is to ensure that MEC as an institution understands gender equality and women empowerment concepts and programming and how to mainstream gender into its institutional processes and procedures and in the planning of operations.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Result: all MEC strategies and procedures have been reviewed and genderised. These include the Communication Strategy, MEC's Gender Policy, MEC's Recruitment Policy, all MEC Senior Officers trained on gender and a Gender and Election Conference planned for early part of the Q3</p> </div>
<p>Activity Result 1.8: Critical procurement support</p>	<p>The project supported the following critical procurement within Q2:</p> <p>The procurement of spare parts for Biometric Registration Kits. In the third quarter of the project, the additional funds which the donors have contributed will be set out in detail and will require an amendment to the original Project Document.</p>
<p>Activity Result 2.1: Increased community and civic understanding of gender equality and women's right to political participation</p>	<p>The project funded and provided technical support for the implementation and achievement of the following activities and results in Q2:</p> <p>3 May Launch of the 50:50 Campaign - The project supported and participated in the Launch of the 50:50 Campaign in Lilongwe. The project's support to this activity was twofold: firstly, the project provided resources to support the preparatory activities and the launch event itself; and secondly the project provided technical guidance and support for the planning and organisation of the events. The objective of the project's participation in the launch was to help in the promotion and adoption of the 50:50 campaign. It also served to mobilise key target groups such as political parties, traditional leaders and religious leaders and the general public to actively support women's political participation and representation. Over 1000 people, comprising the various implementing agencies and subgroups of the 50:50 campaign management, were in attendance. The launch was also broadcast live on Zodiak Broadcasting Station (ZBS) and it is estimated to have reached over 75% of Malawi population.</p>

Result: 5 Party SGs and 4 Traditional Leaders signed a commitment to support women to participate in the forthcoming 2019 tripartite elections; the launch also contributed to the increased visibility of female MPs and their developmental work and significantly contribute towards a positive narrative and attitude towards women, especially female candidates and MPs. The project also used the campaign launch to popularise and disseminate the findings of the Perception and Political Economy Analysis.

4 May, Launch of Newsletter - As part of the project's efforts at supporting targeted communication for promoting women in politics and positive perceptions and attitudes towards women at the community level, it has developed a Parliamentary Women's Caucus (PWC) Newsletter. The Newsletter is primarily aimed at documenting the work of PWC and profiling the activities and programmes of its members to a wider readership. This is expected to contribute to increased visibility of female MPs and their contributions to national and community development which will, in turn, showcase the capacity of women and lead to an acceptance of women candidates, especially at the community level.

Result: Over 1,500 copies of the first edition of the Newsletter were distributed; the Newsletter is expected to contribute to the profiling and visibility of women candidates and MPs.

25 June, Meeting with Parliamentary Women's Caucus - the project supported a planning meeting with Parliamentary Women's Caucus. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the organisation of community dialogue meetings with key stakeholders at the community level, including traditional leaders, constituency and community level political party leaders. The meeting discussed and agreed on the following: the need to develop a lobby strategy; a reporting template; a profiling strategy for showcasing community development initiatives of the members of the Parliamentary Women Caucus. 30 women MPs and 4 WLSA representatives attended the meeting².

Result: the community dialogue meetings are expected to enhance visibility of the female MPs as well as offer a platform for them to engage community stakeholders as a way of sustaining and mobilizing support in the run up to the 2019 elections.

16th 2018, Voter mobilisation campaign in Kasungu - In support of the commencement of 1st phase of the Voter registration exercise, the project organised a voter mobilisation campaign in Kasungu targeting women voters. This activity forms part of the project's efforts at encouraging eligible citizens, especially potential women voters to turn out to register. The campaign was for sensitizing and mobilizing communities to register and to support women's political representation. Key messages at the rally centered on the importance of the voter registration exercise, women's political participation and representation and the role of political party leaders, traditional leaders, religious leaders, in the promotion of women political participation.

² This activity is implemented through WLSA one of the organisations that UN Women is working with

Result: About 2000 people attended the event which was also covered by Zodiak Broadcasting Station to 6 districts (Mzimba, Karonga, Dedza, Nkhotakota, Mulanje and Zomba). The event highlighted the critical to link between women participation in voters' registration and women representation in the coming 2019 tripartite elections.

Activity Result 2.2: Women's capacity to conduct competitive, well-resourced and innovative campaigns is enhanced

The project funded and provided technical support for the implementation and achievement of the following activities and results in Q2:

May 2018, He-for-She orientation sessions - The project organised He-for-She orientation sessions for religious and traditional leaders, media practitioners and district political party leaders. The sessions were aimed at encouraging and lobbying these leaders to actively support, promote and protect women in politics; prevent violence against women in politics; provide equal opportunities; and, balanced and gender sensitive media reporting. The sessions also served to increase community understanding of the He-for-She concept and the benefit of gender equality, political empowerment and women's political participation and representation in 2019 and beyond.

The sessions were also used to validate and disseminate the Political Economy Analysis and Perception Study on the Factors and Perceptions that Affect Women's Political Representation at National and Local Levels in Malawi. A total of 292 people from various groups including CBO networks, youth networks; faith and traditional leaders, media, district political party leaders participated in the sessions. This comprised of 176 males and 116 females.

Result: All the 176 men who participated in the sessions volunteered to be He-for-She champions in their respective organisations and communities. The orientation sessions also resulted in the establishment of action plans for He-for-She movements. UN Women will provide technical support and guidance for the implementation of these action plans to ensure sustained He-for-She activities at the community level.

Activity Result 2.3: Establish measures to monitor and mitigate incidents of political harassment and violence against women in politics and electoral processes

The project funded and provided technical support for the implementation and achievement of the following activities and results in Q2:

22 and 27 June, targeted advocacy engagement with political party leaders - The project continued to support specific engagements with political parties to lobby for leadership support for women's political participation and representation and the prevention of violence against women in politics and elections. Part of these engagements is to ensure that political party comments that were given during the launch of the 50:50 campaign are followed through. For Q2, one-to-one engagements were held with party Presidents and Secretary Generals of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) and the United Democratic Front (UDF).

Result: leaders of the two parties reaffirmed their commitments and firm resolve to initiate and implement mechanisms to address incidences of violence against women in politics and elections.

25 June 2018, Technical team meeting on the Gender Elections Engagement Room (GEER)- the project is providing both technical and financial support for the establishment of GEER to monitor, report and mitigate incidences of political harassment and violence against women in politics and the electoral process. The objective of the meeting was, therefore, to discuss the operationalisation of the

GEER including agreeing on modalities for the identification of monitors and the development of monitoring tools and training of monitors. Other issues discussed centred on modalities for collaboration and coordination with other stakeholders like National Initiative for Civic Education (NICE). The GEER is an initiative between Ministry of Gender, 50:50 Management Agency; MECS project.

Result: This meeting helped in clarifying the collaborative inputs; the setup of the room; identification of monitors and involvement of CSOs; it also helped to generate consensus on the need to fast-track the establishment of the GEER to begin to collect and analyse data on Violence Against Women and map out response mechanisms.

Activity Result 3.1: The capacity of the CMD as the primary forum for inter- and intra-party dialogue is strengthened and its long-term sustainability is fostered

Result: Parties agreed to fully support MEC's decision to use the National Biometric ID as the sole identification document for national voters registration.

The project funded and provided technical support for the implementation and achievement of the following activities and results in Q2:

Consultative session with budget and finance committee – with both technical and financial support from the project, CMD had a series of engagements with the Budget and Finance Committee of Parliament to lobby for state subvention to support some core activities of CMD. This is in line with project's objective of assisting CMD to be less donor driven in the implementation of certain core activities and programmes. Discussions with the Budget and Finance Committee have, however, not yielded tangible results in terms of commitments in the 2018/2019 budget statement. And since 2019 is an election year and the composition of parliamentary committees are likely to change, the CMD Board has advised that further engagements should be held after the elections. This notwithstanding, CMD, with the technical support of the project, will continue to explore other options including lobbying for a funded role for CMD when the office of registrar of political parties is reconstituted as per the provisions of the new Political Parties Act and the regular payment of membership dues. On this, at the May 10 CMD Board meeting, a proposal on the need to restructure and reform CMD's corporate governance structures and practices was adopted.

Result: the Board constituted a committee to review and make proposals for the restructuring of CMD's corporate governance processes. One of the key results expected from this process is a more stringent system with clear sanctions on membership dues.

Networking and Representation – The project continued to support CMD networking and engagements with other stakeholders. To this end, CMD participated in and contributed to a number of activities. Project support in this area was the provision of technical support and the meeting with the media on the Political Parties Bill for which project resources (vehicle and fuel) were used.

At the national level, CMD participated in:

- NGO Board and the Council for the Non-Governmental Organizations meetings;
- 50 – 50 campaign initiatives led by the Ministry of Gender and the 50-50 Management.
- CMD as part of its programme to educate the general public on the Political Parties Bill also made presentation on the Bill to the Media in Blantyre.

At the international level, CMD participated in

- An African Union Consultative Workshop on Political Party Programming in Africa, held in Accra, Ghana;
- CMD as a member of the Global Partnership for Multiparty Democracy, CMD participated in a workshop on Political Parties Engagement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development



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	<p>organized by UNDP in New York. This was done to assist UNDP in strategizing on how best it could use political parties for promoting the SDGs.</p> <p>Institutional support – The project continues to provide timely institutional support to CMD through its technical experts and funding support for the running of the institution and implementation of its activities.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Result: with the support of the project, CMD has been able to fully implement all planned activities and filled all staffing positions including Program Manager, Finance and Administration Manager, Program officer and Program Assistant.</p> </div>
<p>Activity Result 3.2: Strengthen existing political party development initiatives to promote the evolution of issue-based platforms</p>	<p>The project funded and provided technical support for the implementation and achievement of the following activities and results in Q2:</p> <p>9 April, sensitization session on the Political Parties Act for parliamentary parties – The project supported CMD to organise sensitization sessions on the new Political Parties Act for the leadership of the parties with representation in Parliament. Directors of Women, Elections, Youth and Party Secretary Generals of all CMD member political parties (except AFORD) participated in the workshop. The sensitization workshops formed part of the project’s efforts to prepare the parties for the implementation of the Act. In this way, once the Minister of Justice appoints a date for the coming into force of the law, political parties will be ready, prepared and able to comply with the provisions of the new Act. Participants were taken through the provisions of the Act with special focus on clarifying the following key and essential components and provisions of the Act:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance procedures i.e. what provisions require immediate compliance once a date for coming into of the Act is appointed; and, the documentation that is required for registration and re-registration of Parties; • Clarification on matters of declaration of donations and assets; • Special focus on clarifying the issue of handouts; • Conditions for the deregistration of a political party. <p>The project within this activity result is also supporting lobbying and advocacy efforts for the implementation of the Act. CMD, with the support of the project, thus continues to engage the Minister of Justice and the Registrar of political parties for the implementation of the Act.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Result: tentative timelines have been agreed with the Minister, including meetings between the Minister and political parties, to discuss the implementation of the Act. This meeting is expected to take place in the third quarter. Representatives who participated in the session expressed their satisfaction as that was the first time they were taken through each and every article of the Act to explain the requirements and implication of the Act to political parties; participants identified some provisions/aspects of the Act that may require reconsideration once the law comes into force. For instance, parties find it problematic for the Act to hold party SGs personally liable for infraction on donations. Other provisions of concern include the requirement of 100 members from every District for the party to be recognised; this, they believe, may create problems as some Districts have a low population and it may become mathematically impossible to get 100 members if the number of parties increase. The Act makes it an offense for a person to be a registered member of more than one party, which is not presently the case and someone could maliciously use membership of a party to undermine it whilst properly supporting another one.</p> </div>

11 May, Sensitization session on the PPA for parties with no representation in Parliament - To ensure that all parties - including those not represented in Parliament - are sensitized on the Act, the project supported the organization of a separate workshop for parties with no seat in parliament. It was attended by 20 parties. This was after publishing calls in the print and electronic media. The fact that the remaining 30 or so parties did not attend could possibly mean that those parties have ceased to exist or may be a pointer that once the Act comes into force, not many political parties will remain on the register. The format of the workshop and topics and issues discussed were similar those discussed with the parties in Parliament (ref. **Activity 3.2.4**).

Result: the workshop was helpful in allaying the fears of these parties that the coming into effect of the Act does not mean an immediate deregistration of political parties without representation in the national assembly.

The project supported the organization of working sessions for the CMD Technical Working Group (TWG). Membership of the TWG includes the Ministry of Justice, Law Commission, Law Society, Registrar of Political Parties and the Faculty of Law of the University of Malawi. The sessions focused on analyzing and unpacking of the new Political Parties Act to identify and isolate key provisions and issues including: compliance for political parties; preparedness of the Registrar of Political Parties; issues that may require further reflection and discussion and possibly amendments; and actions required on the part of Government.

26 April, CMD/MEC Coordination meeting - As part of the project's efforts to ensure better and enhanced coordination and interaction between MEC and political parties, MEC and CMD have established a coordination mechanism that enables MEC to meet and discuss the electoral processes and update parties on electoral preparations before the main National Elections Consultative Forum (NECOF). The meeting provided an excellent platform for MEC and the Political parties to discuss, clarify and build consensus on the electoral process. This helped to reduce possible confrontations between representatives of the Political Parties and MEC at the NECOF as most of the issues had already been discussed and clarification given. The topics included:

- MEC provided an update on the electoral calendar especially the shift of the start of the registration exercise;
- MEC also elaborated on the use of the national ID card as the sole identification document, and indicated prospective voters will not be turned back since the registration staff from NRB will be available;
- Political parties reconfirmed their support to the use of the national ID as the sole means of registration as a voter.

A contentious issue was the incidences of violence experienced during the Mulanje and Mangochi by-elections. The Commission and the parties agreed that the prevention of violence in the electoral process should be a shared responsibility between the parties, the police and MEC. Both parties therefore, agreed to engage security agents to ensure violence-free processes. The issue of the national broadcaster was also raised, and members agreed to engage MACRA to message out in the same direction and ensure balanced political party coverage. MEC also briefed the parties on the status of Electoral Reforms and noted that efforts are underway to try and salvage some parts of these.

Results: political parties reaffirmed their support for MEC's decision to use the national ID as the sole means of identification for registering as a voter. The Commission and the parties agreed to work together and also coordinate better with the security agencies to prevent violence as experienced in the Mulanje by-election; it was agreed that MACRA should be engaged earlier to ensure fair coverage of political parties

	<p>Within the second quarter, the project supported MPLC meetings in Mangochi, Nsanje and Rumphu. Mulanje, Blantyre and Nkhata Bay. Common issues from these MPLCs revolved around the signing of a Code of Conduct at the local level and inviting national level politicians to witness the “peace pacts” but also to hold MPLCs at the constituency level. They have also used these meetings to explain the registration procedures whilst inviting political parties to mobilise their people. In a specific case of Rumphu, the MPLC has embarked on revising the code of conduct to address some emerging issues. The final draft will have to be vetted by the MEC.</p>
<p>Activity Result 3.3: Promote political party policies and procedures to improve inclusion of women</p>	<p>The project funded and provided technical support for the implementation and achievement of the following activities and results in Q2:</p> <p>10 May, Joint agenda setting for women wings - In order to promote cross-party discussions and dialogue on common issues affecting Women Wings of Political Parties, the project supported the organization of working sessions for Women Wings of all CMD represented political parties. The working session discussed and built consensus on common issues of interest to the women in political parties and encouraged women to develop a common agenda to enhance their role in their respective parties. SGs, Publicity Secretaries, Directors of Women of 7 Political Parties participated in the session. It was noticed that the status of Women Wings within political parties is varied. Others have fully fledged wings while some parties have just the directors of Women without the structure to support them. The project will continue to support CMD to assist parties to strengthen Women Wings to ensure they play an active role within parties</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Result: representatives at the meeting agreed on a road map towards the establishment of a cross party Gender Action Group (GAG). The meeting agreed to present the proposal of the GAG to the Board of CMD during its 10 May Board Meeting for adoption.</p> </div>
<p>Activity Result 3.4: Promote political party policies and procedures to improve inclusion of youth</p>	<p>The project funded and provided technical support for the implementation and achievement of the following activities and results in Q2:</p> <p>9 May, Joint agenda setting session for Party Youth Wings - In order to promote cross-party discussions and dialogue on common issues among the Youth and Women Wings of Political Parties, the project supported the organization of working sessions for Youth Wings of all CMD represented political parties to discuss and build consensus on common issues of interest to the youth in political parties and to encourage the youth to develop a common agenda to promote the role of the youth within their respective political parties. The meeting provided a common plan to promote young people’s participation and representation in the politics and decision-making processes at all levels. 7 Political Parties participated in the session. It was noticed that the status of Youth Wings within political parties is varied. Others have fully fledged wings while some parties have just the directors of youth without the structure to support them.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Result: the youth wings agreed to develop a plan of action for interparty mobilization of young people within political parties for peaceful 2019 election and to create a forum for regular meeting and interaction among youth of political parties on issues affecting the youth.</p> </div>
<p>Activity Result 4.1: Strong project governance structures and processes</p>	<p>The project funded and provided technical support for the implementation and achievement of the following activities and results in Q2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17 May, fifth Technical Committee meeting (second for 2018) • 5th April Steering Committee meeting (second for the project) <p>Minutes from these meetings have been circulated.</p>

V. DEVIATION FROM WORK PLAN

Activity Result 1.1

- Due to persistent delays in the MEC Functional Review and what can realistically be achieved between now and 2019, the project has decided to suspend this activity until after the elections.
- The “Support to drafting of Operational plan for introducing electoral reforms” will have to be dropped as it is now clear that there will not be any electoral reforms until after the Tripartite elections.

Activity Result 1.2

- There have been delays on the “Revised Code of Conduct” due to MEC’s reconsidered strategy of approaching the paramount Chiefs individually and bilaterally before convening a major conference. This is due to the ongoing resistance of the Chiefs to sign up to such a document.

Aside from the above, discussions have taken place and new Agreements will be signed with certain basket fund development partners that will see alterations to the 2018 AWP in Quarters 3 and 4 as well as a modified project document. Please refer to the Monitoring framework annex for further details.

VI. ASSESSMENT OF ACHIEVEMENT IN RELATION TO PLANNED OBJECTIVES FOR THE PERIOD

Within the overall context of the three core output areas, the project has achieved significant results over Quarters 1 and 2. The project had to support the capacity development of MEC and CMD to effectively implement their mandates and programmes. 2018 marked the intense preparations for the 2019 tripartite elections. Activities of the project, therefore, focused on supporting MEC to develop the requisite systems and processes that would lay a solid foundation for the electoral calendar which concretely starts with voter registration. MEC was supported to develop and implement the interoperability framework for Biometric Voters’ registration using the BRKs and the National ID. Other activities centred on promoting open dialogue and consultations with key stakeholders including political parties to get buy in and support for MEC activities and programmes. This resulted in overwhelming support for MEC - from CSOs, political parties and government - for the use of the National ID as the sole document for voter registration. The project further supported the VR exercises through the funding of the payment of all National Registration Staff that were deployed side-by-side with the MEC Registration Officers to ensure that individuals who turn up to register as voters but were not in the national registry are given the opportunity to first register for the National ID before they register as voters. This way the project ensures that no eligible Malawian is denied the opportunity to register and voter.

The Project was also very efficient in the management of funds and resources. This is in the light of the project’s spending and delivery rates as outlined in the financial report and the achievements of the following results and milestones as outlined in the 2018 AWP and budget:

- For the first time MEC has developed comprehensive complaints handling guidelines. Most stakeholders during the validation process for the guidelines, including members of the judiciary and political parties, were highly satisfied with the quality and content of the document and were hopeful that if implemented they will streamline the complaints handling process, as expressed during the validation workshop;
- Development and implementation of a new five-year Strategic Plan and other strategic documents including the CVE and Communication Strategies;
- The development and implementation of the interoperability framework that has allowed MEC to use NRB BRKs and the National ID for voter registration. The National ID as the sole source of ID verification for registration as a voter would allow MEC to come up with one of the cleanest and credible voters’ registers in Malawi’s history. This will significantly contribute towards a credible polling process;
- With the support of the project MEC was able to recruit and train 200 Master Trainers (MTs). These MTs have gone to train all Voter Registration Supervisors who are currently providing supervision and guidance for the VR process;

- The organisation of common agenda setting sessions for Women and Youth within political parties. CMD with the support of the project, organised cross-party agenda setting working sessions for members of the women and youth wings to discuss, dialogue and adopt common approaches to enhancing the role of women and youth within political parties in Malawi. These working sessions led to the development and implementation of the Gender Action Group and a Youth Action Plan by CMD with the support of the project;
- Reviewed and engendered all key policy documents and strategies of MEC.

VII. ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT'S CONTRIBUTION TO GENDER, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The project recognizes that women, youth and persons with disabilities play an important role in the development of Malawi. The project within the context of the overall UNDP commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals and especially SDG 16 which demands that no one is left behind. To this end, the project strives to promote and support inclusive electoral processes that provided the spaces for qualitative participation and representation of women, youth and persons with disabilities. This is in the light of the projects special focus and attention to issues of women and youth participation and representation. Output 2 of the project for instance, is specifically targeted at women political empowerment for active participation and representation in the political decision-making processes of Malawi. Activities under Output 2 therefore, focus on building the capacity of women aspirants and candidates in the electoral process. Within Output 2, the project is establishing the Elections Engagement Room which aims at monitoring, reporting and developing specific response mechanisms on violence against women in the electoral process.

Additionally, the project under Output 3, "Support to political party development within the framework of the Centre for Multiparty Democracy (CMD)" is supporting the mainstreaming of women and youth representation in elected and appointed positions within the political party structures and in parliamentary and local level elections. The project is further supporting MEC to ensure the electoral processes and activities are accessible to persons with disabilities. It is within this context that the project supported MEC to come out with special measures in the form of 25 per cent reduction in nomination fees for youth and 50 per cent reduction for women and persons with disabilities.

VIII. PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

• *Project Visibility*

The project continues to acknowledge donors through events and materials production. The EU was mentioned by all key note speakers at every public event and the project contributed to the monthly Newsletter produced by the UNDP Brussels office that highlights all the electoral projects that are being financed, or co-financed, by the EU.

With the signing of Agreements with Irish Aid and DFID UK, the visibility was expanded at all project events to the three partners.

• *Staffing*

The project in Q2 was staffed by the following Staff and Experts:

Name of Staff	Position	Nationality
Richard Cox	Chief Technical Advisor	British
Busekese Kilembe	Programme Analyst	Malawian
Fatuma Silungwe	Legal Analyst	Malawian



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Luta Shaba	Gender Specialist (long-term Consultant)	Zimbabwean
Raphael Asuliwonnu	Capacity Development Specialist	Ghanaian

Aside from the list above, it should be highlighted that Output 2 is lead by UNWOMEN and there is one dedicated full-time staff to the project. He is Victor Maulidi, a Malawian national who joined in March this year. Other members of the UNWOMEN office, including the Representative – Clara Mah Anyangwe (Cameroon) also contribute to the project’.